

CLAIMS

1. A computing device comprising:
a processing system;
an externally-accessible memory coupled to the processing system;
5 an electronic file stored in the externally-accessible memory;
a digital certificate containing information associating the electronic file
and an identifier linked to the computing device; and
wherein the processing system determines whether there is a valid
association between a current state of the electronic file and the identifier prior to
10 accessing the electronic file.
2. The computing system of claim 1 wherein the digital certificate
stores a software signature derived from an initial state of the electronic file.
3. The computing system of claim 2 wherein the software signature
comprises a hash of the initial state of the electronic file, encrypted responsive to
15 the identifier.
4. The computing system of claim 2 wherein the information includes
a certificate signature of selected fields of the digital certificate.
5. The computing system of claim 4 wherein the certificate signature
comprises a hash of selected fields, encrypted responsive to the identifier.
- 20 6. The computing device of claim 1 wherein the electronic file
comprises a program.
7. The computing device of claim 1 wherein the electronic file
comprises a data file.
8. The computing device of claim 1 wherein the data file includes a
25 unique identification code for the computing device.

9. The computing device of claim 8, wherein the unique identification code comprises an International Mobile Equipment Identity number.

10. The computing device of claim 1 wherein the certificate includes execution parameters associated with the electronic file.

5 11. The computing device of claim 1 wherein the digital certificate further includes information associating the electronic file with an application program.

12. A computing device comprising:
a processing system;
10 an externally-accessible memory coupled to the processing system;
a system program stored in the externally-accessible memory;
a digital certificate containing information to uniquely associate the system program with the computing device and further containing a unique identification code for the computing device.

15 13. The computing device of claim 12 wherein the unique identification code comprises an International Mobile Equipment Identity number.

14. A method of protecting electronic files in an externally-accessible memory of a computing device, comprising the steps of:
generating a digital certificate which associates the electronic file and an
20 identifier linked to the computing device;
accessing the electronic file only after determining that the association between the electronic file and the identifier is valid.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the generating step comprises the step of generating a digital certificate including a software signature derived
25 from an initial state of the electronic file.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein the step of generating a digital certificate including a software signature comprises the step of generating a hash of the initial state of the electronic file, encrypted responsive to the identifier.

5 17. The method of claim 15 wherein the generating step comprises the step of generating a digital certificate including a certificate signature derived from selected fields of the digital certificate.

10 18. The method of claim 17 wherein the step of generating a digital certificate including a certificate signature comprises the step of generating a hash of the selected fields of the digital certificate, encrypted responsive to the identifier.

19. The method of claim 18 and further comprising the step of storing a unique identifier for the computing device in the electronic file.

15 20. The method of claim 19 wherein the storing step comprises the step of storing an International Mobile Equipment Identity number in the electronic file.

21. The method of claim 14 and further comprising the steps of associating the electronic file with a particular software program and accessing the electronic file only in connection with execution of the particular software program.